

United States Government

Department of Energy

memorandum

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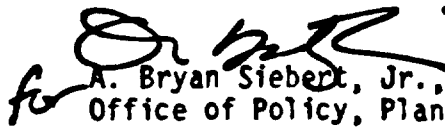
DATE: DEC 23 1985
REPLY TO: DP-6
ATTN OF:
SUBJECT: Compact of Free Association

TO: Don Ofte, DP-2

The Compact of Free Association (COFA) was passed by Congress December 13, 1985. President Reagan signed the COFA in a White House ceremony December 20, 1985. As a Department we achieved our goals in the COFA specifically: 1) espousal of claims against the United States for damage and injuries resulting from nuclear testing; and 2) designating the President as the official responsible for deciding which cabinet level Secretary should be responsible for the radiological health care of the Marshallese. Both of these items are significant for Defense Programs. Previous versions of the COFA designated and compelled the Secretary of Energy to maintain the health care programs. My staff has spent countless hours meeting with Congressional staff members, as well as the staffs from Department of Interior and the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations to achieve these significant language modifications. The impact without the changes for health care responsibilities would be \$30 million over a 15 year period. While this is not a significant weapons budget saving, the attention paid to this budget item by the Armed Services Committees over the last 3 years has been critical and detailed. The COFA will allow the U.S. to maintain the program, or portions of the program, on a government-to-government basis through "buy back" technical assistance or other funding arrangements through the COFA.

The next steps after Presidential approval include:

1. Republic of the Marshalls review of the signed COFA to assure that no major changes have been made. The plebiscite occurred 2 years ago on an earlier version of the COFA.
2. Implementation meeting in January with DOI, State, OMSN, and the Island governments.
3. DP program officials prepare the program transition plan and develop negotiation strategies with the new Island government as well as those U.S. agencies involved.
4. DOE establishment of position with respect to Administration designation of agency responsibility for the health care of the Marshallese.


A. Bryan Siebert, Jr., Director
Office of Policy, Planning,
and External Affairs
Defense Programs

DOE-John Rudolph's files, box